*Sumit Ganguly*

# AVOIDING WAR IN KASHMIR

Will the current simmering conflict over Kashmir lead to another subcontinental war? This complex question has plagued India-Pakistan relations since both countries gained independence in 1947, and over the past year tensions in the area have risen sharply. Continuing border skirmishes threaten an already precarious situation, in which international and domestic politics are intertwined with the passions of rival ethnic, religious and partisan interests.

Three decades ago concerned diplomats in capitals near and far were acutely sensitive to the stresses of Kashmir. The United States, the Soviet Union and, at times, China were all engaged at varying levels of intensity; superpower rivalries focused on Kashmir, which sometimes stood as a surrogate for larger global interests.

Now the global situation has altered, even as the basic tensions of Kashmir remain the same. Washington, Moscow and, to a certain extent, Beijing share common interests in ensuring that the two belligerent nations of the subcontinent do not inadvertently stumble into a major conflagration that neither India nor Pakistan could afford, and that could even lead to nuclear escalation.

A new generation of policymakers has lost its predecessor's sensitivity to the Kashmir conflict, as other world crises have competed for attention. Now the fashioning of an American policy appropriate to this potentially volatile situation entails first of all renewed understanding of the forces that led up to it.

## II

The Kashmir conflict is rooted in the colonial history of the subcontinent. At the time of British withdrawal from the subcontinent two competing visions of state-creation animated the nationalist political leaderships. One vision, championed by Jawaharlal Nehru, was quintessentially secular and demo-

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cratic. This view held that British India's diverse religious, linguistic and ethnic groups could coexist only under the aegis of a strong secular state. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, challenged Nehru's vision of a unified Indian subcontinent. Jinnah contended that the Muslims of the subcontinent constituted a nation separate from the rest of (Hindu) India, with a distinct religious heritage and markedly different social customs. He also argued that the Muslim minority would be discriminated against in a predominantly Hindu state.

Despite various last-minute efforts by the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, as well as the British government, continued unity of the subcontinent proved unattainable. As British withdrawal approached, a complex formula was created for the division of the area. Contiguous Muslim-majority states under the direct rule of the British crown would become Pakistan, with the border states of Punjab and Bengal being divided. The real problem arose with the disposition of the so-called princely states. Nominally independent, the rulers of these states, some 565 in number, recognized the British crown to be the paramount power in South Asia. With British withdrawal the doctrine of paramountcy lapsed. Several of the princely potentates, especially Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir, had harbored visions of independence with British decolonization. Lord Mountbatten, under pressure from Nehru and others in the Indian nationalist movement, dashed their hopes. In the closing days of British rule he insisted that they could not declare independence, but must join either India or Pakistan.

Kashmir posed a unique problem. Led by a Hindu monarch, but composed of a predominantly Muslim population, Kashmir was contiguous to Pakistan. Maharaja Singh's desire for an independent Kashmir was unacceptable to both Nehru and Jinnah. Pakistan asserted a moral claim to Kashmir based on the state's Muslim-majority population and borders, which abutted what would become Pakistan's western wing. What complicated the picture was the existence of a popular, democratic and secular movement in the valley. This movement, known as the Kashmir National Conference, was led by a dynamic young Muslim, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. As the maharaja waffled on the question of accession to India or Pakistan, Pakistani troops disguised as tribesmen joined local Pathan tribesmen and attacked some of the western border

areas of Kashmir. In a panic the maharaja sought the assistance of India's newly formed government to ward off the marauders. Nehru promptly agreed to provide assistance but only *after* Kashmir formally acceded to the Indian Union.

The introduction of Indian troops into the Kashmir valley following the accession led to war with Pakistan in 1947. The war saw the introduction of the regular Pakistani army in support of the so-called irregular Azad ("Free") Kashmir forces. India stopped the Pakistani advance but not before Pakistan had occupied the northwestern portion of Kashmir. With the expectation that multilateral intervention might lead to a resolution of the conflict in its favor, India referred the issue to the United Nations. The Indian government demanded an immediate withdrawal of Pakistani troops from northwestern Kashmir, a return to a climate of normalcy in the region, and preparations for a plebiscite to ascertain the views of the Kashmiris on the question of accession. Pakistan, while supporting the plebiscite, refused to withdraw its troops from northwestern Kashmir. The United Nations did manage to obtain a ceasefire, which went into effect on January 1, 1949. Despite subsequent U.N. efforts, India and Pakistan continue to adhere to those positions, discouraging multilateral resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

With neither side accepting the other's position, both have sought to absorb their respective portions of Kashmir. The Pakistani-held territory was provisionally integrated into the Pakistani state, as were the Northern Areas that abut the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union. Pakistan has directly administered the Northern Areas since their creation in the early 1950s. A cabinet-level officer, the minister of Kashmir affairs, is responsible for the political oversight of this territory. The remainder of Pakistani-held Kashmir is known as Azad Kashmir. Nominally, Pakistan still insists that the issue of Kashmir be resolved through a U.N.-supervised plebiscite. On the Indian side, the state of Kashmir was also accorded special status under Article 370 of the Indian constitution. Among other matters it allows only native Kashmiris to own immovable property in Kashmir.

As its disillusionment with the U.N.-sponsored negotiations grew, India gradually moved to extend its administrative control over Kashmir. Local elections were held in 1951, providing Sheikh Abdullah's Kashmir National Conference an overwhelming victory. Subsequently in 1953 the National

Conference split over issues of both policy and personality. At that time one of Abdullah's lieutenants, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, took control of the party and the government. Bakshi's rise to power saw the beginning of Abdullah's troubles. Abdullah, in an attempt to extract greater resources from New Delhi, had made a series of inflammatory statements about Kashmir's future within India. Bakshi, with obvious encouragement from New Delhi, had Abdullah imprisoned. Pakistan protested Abdullah's incarceration, but their objections had little impact on India. Remonstrations by Kashmiris, however, led Pakistani officials to conclude incorrectly that local support existed for a Pakistani-sponsored insurgency.

III

Numerous factors prompted Pakistan's military ruler, President Mohammed Ayub Khan, to reassess Pakistan's Kashmir policy in the early 1960s. The failure of the U.N. negotiations, New Delhi's steady efforts to integrate Kashmir into its territories, and India's substantial rearmament program (begun after the disastrous border war with China in 1962) made military action to obtain Kashmir seem the only option. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then a rising young politician (and father of the recently deposed Pakistani prime minister, Benazir Bhutto), in all likelihood prodded Khan to make that reappraisal. From the standpoint of Pakistan's leadership it must have appeared that the "window of opportunity" to settle the Kashmir issue on favorable terms was rapidly closing. Declining international interest in the issue coupled with India's growing military strength would render chimerical future efforts to wrest Kashmir from India.

Before embarking on a full-scale operation in Kashmir, Pakistan tested Indian resolve in border skirmishes in January 1965 in an area known as the Rann of Kutch, in the western Indian state of Gujarat. The Indians, unwilling to be drawn into a major military conflagration over non-strategic territory, sought a quick ceasefire and referred the issue to the International Court of Justice. Both Khan and Bhutto construed India's response as a sign of weakness, clearly the wrong inference.

Shortly after the Kutch episode, riots erupted in Kashmir with the theft of a sacred Muslim relic, the *Hazaratbal*, a hair of the Prophet Mohammed. The local government was able to restore order but not before considerable havoc had been

wreaked throughout the valley. The Pakistani leadership construed this breakdown in public order as an indication of popular discontent against the Indian government, another mistake in judgment.

These two flawed inferences led Pakistani decision-makers to develop a two-phased plan to seize Kashmir by force (Operation Gibraltar). In the first phase Pakistani troops disguised as local tribesmen would cross the porous frontier and foment an insurgency in the border areas of the state. In the second phase Pakistani troops taking advantage of the prevailing chaos would then invade and seize the state in a short sharp war, then call for a ceasefire and appeal to the international community to hold a plebiscite to determine Kashmir's future.

The Pakistani strategy went awry at the outset. As the infiltration started, the local Kashmiri populace proved to be singularly uncooperative and, in fact, turned the infiltrators over to the authorities. Despite the collapse of this first phase, Pakistan nevertheless decided to attack Kashmir in early September 1965. To the surprise of Ayub Khan, the Indians not only put up a vigorous defense but crossed the ceasefire line in Kashmir and the recognized Indian-Pakistani international boundary to the south. Under considerable pressure from the international community, including a U.S. arms embargo on the warring parties, the war was brought to a close within a few weeks.

Owing to its growing commitments in Vietnam, Washington did not seek to involve itself in the resolution of this conflict. American abstention enabled the Soviets to step into the breach to play the role of honest broker. At Tashkent in January 1966 leaders from India and Pakistan met to discuss a possible resolution to the Kashmir dispute. Both parties made some important concessions, consenting to give up territory seized in the conflict and to return to the status quo ante. India's prime minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, died while in Tashkent hours after signing the agreement; he was thus spared criticism about its terms. Ayub Khan, however, faced a fierce attack from domestic opponents, notably Bhutto. Grievances about the Tashkent agreement coupled with other domestic problems, particularly lagging economic growth, led to Ayub's overthrow in 1969 in a military coup.

In 1971 war between India and Pakistan once again erupted. While one of the fronts involved Kashmir in the west,

the bulk of the fighting was confined to Pakistan's eastern wing. The precipitant of this war was the failure of Bhutto and the military regime of General Yahya Khan to reach an accord with Bengali nationalists in East Pakistan following popular elections in 1970. The political deadlock resulted in a grisly military crackdown in East Pakistan, leading to the flight of some 9.8 million people into India. After some internal debate the Indian government decided that it was cheaper to resort to war than to absorb the refugees into India's already troubled eastern region. The 1971 war resulted in the breakup of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh, but Kashmir saw only limited military conflict.

Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto met in 1972 at the Indian hill resort of Simla and signed an accord that had far-reaching implications for the future of the Kashmir dispute. The second paragraph of the agreement stated that "the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through *bilateral negotiations* or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them."[1]

The Indian government views this paragraph as a clear indication that the two sides agreed to settle the Kashmir dispute without external intervention. The Pakistani leadership, however, contends that this is a narrow reading of the text and that acceptance of such an interpretation would denigrate its national sovereignty. Particular interpretations of the treaty are really partisan exercises: India wants a strict interpretation to prevent an internationalization of the Kashmir dispute; Pakistan wants to focus international attention on Kashmir.

## IV

The international level is only one dimension of the Kashmir conflict; domestic politics plays an equally important role. At the most general level, the uprisings in Kashmir since the fall of 1989 can be seen as a part of a second wave of ethnolinguistic assertion that has swept India over the past decade. The first wave of ethnic subnationalism manifested itself in the early 1950s. The Linguistic Reorganization Act, which divided substantial portions of the country on the basis

[1] Agreement on Bilateral Relations Between the Governments of India and Pakistan, paragraph two; signed at Simla, July 2, 1972. Emphasis added.

of dominant language groups, largely addressed the needs of the time.

This second wave of ethnolinguistic assertion stems in large measure from the very success of India's "positive discrimination" (i.e., affirmative action) policies. Disenfranchised minorities have entered the political arena through increased access to education and employment, generating a backlash from segments of Hindu India. This resentment against the political success of minorities has perhaps been most pronounced in northwestern India, where Hindus live cheek-by-jowl with large numbers of minorities, particularly Muslims. As ethnic and communal passions have led to riots and sporadic violence, minority communities have tended to close ranks. This phenomenon has been particularly marked among younger members of the community, those seeking entry into the competitive marketplaces of education and employment. In particular, the most militant and fundamentalist organization, the Hezb-ul-Mujahideen, draws the bulk of its support from young, educated Kashmiri Muslims.

The immediate precipitants of the ongoing crisis lie both in Kashmir's domestic politics and in its relations with India's central government. The steady organizational decline in the 1980s of the nationally dominant Congress (I) Party saw the concomitant regionalization of Indian politics. Nevertheless, under the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi and her son, Rajiv, who took command after her death, the party sought to make inroads in states where it lacked a substantial constituency. To this end the party forged dubious alliances with local notables, often to the detriment of the latter.

The Congress (I)/Kashmir National Conference alliance of 1986 was one such example. This arrangement of convenience reduced Farooq Abdullah, the son of the legendary Sheikh Abdullah, to the status of a mere stalking horse for the Congress (I) Party in Kashmir. Furthermore the Kashmir assembly elections of 1987 were marked by chicanery and deceit on a scale not witnessed in recent years in India. Several important consequences ensued from this flawed election. First, the coalition that came to power lacked popular legitimacy. Second, the willingness of the Congress (I) Party to resort to unfair electoral practices to capture power in Kashmir convinced Kashmiris of the reckless disregard that the national government had for democratic procedures and for the principles of federalism. Finally, with the channels of

democratic protest blocked, the dissidents in the Kashmir valley felt that they had little choice but to resort to other means.

By the end of the 1980s a confluence of events caused discontent in Kashmir to reach dangerously high levels. The climate of regional and ethnic assertion that had been building in India and Kashmir combined with the corruption of the electoral process in Kashmir, which choked off the only viable political outlet for the forces that had been steadily gathering steam. Additionally the abject failure of Farooq Abdullah's government to promote economic development in the state provided the catalyst for unrest. As swelling numbers of college-educated Kashmiris discovered bleak employment prospects, their anger and frustration turned against what they correctly perceived to be a corrupt and insensitive regime.

Even as recently as a year ago, however, careful administrative and political actions might have defused the oncoming crisis. In a recently published internal memorandum, former Kashmiri Governor Jagmohan repeatedly warned then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi not only about the growth of militant sentiment but of a significant rise in violent incidents in the valley. The central government, wracked with allegations of bribery over the acquisition of the Swedish Bofors field gun for the Indian Army and gearing up for a national election later in the year, was preoccupied and did little to heed these timely warnings. A combination of the central government's distracted stance and what an internal memo describes as the "total inaction, unbelievable incompetence, widespread corruption and passive connivance" of the Farooq Abdullah regime allowed the insurgency to flourish.[2]

V

Three principal umbrella groups in Kashmir are involved in the recent uprisings. Several dozen loosely allied organizations operate under their aegis. One group, composed of Muslim fundamentalists, is pro-Pakistani in orientation and has links with the fundamentalist Pakistani party Jammait-i-Islami. The organizations allied to the fundamentalist cause are the Muslim Students Federation, the Islami-Jammiat-Tulba and the Hezb-ul-Mujahideen. The second umbrella group is tied to the

[2] Jagmohan, as quoted by Inderjit Badhwar, "Inexplicable Neglect," *India Today*, Feb. 28, 1990, p. 24.

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, which is the oldest of the secessionist organizations, having been established in 1965 during the border war. Allied with the JKLF are the Mahaz-i-Azadi, the Kashmir Students Liberation Front and the Kashmir Mujahideen Liberation Front. These organizations nominally share the JKLF credo; they do not wish to merge with Pakistan but seek to create a separate state of Kashmir. The third group is the Jammu and Kashmir People's League, which has an explicitly pro-Pakistani orientation.

The vast majority of the members of these organizations are young and many are college educated. Estimates of their numbers vary widely. Published assessments put the figure of active membership at about 5,000, but Indian intelligence sources repeatedly claim that at least an equal number are in Pakistan and are seeking to cross the border. This latter figure, however, is difficult to verify. Reliable sources point out that, owing to ideological differences and a diffused command-and-control structure, these groups frequently work at cross-purposes. Nevertheless it cannot be disputed that they have successfully undermined any semblance of civilian authority in the Kashmir valley.

Over the past year, India has repeatedly accused Pakistan of aiding and abetting the insurgency in Kashmir. Pakistan has of course formally denied the charges. In this respect it is worth emphasizing that the roots of the current crisis are essentially indigenous. Incontrovertible evidence of direct Pakistani involvement in the training and arming of the insurgents is hard to establish. It is nevertheless likely that at minimum Pakistan is passively involved in the insurgency. International press reports, for example, have pointed to the existence of sanctuaries for the insurgents in Azad Kashmir.[3] Compelling regional issues also provide certain groups in Pakistan further incentive for involvement in Kashmir. Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence agency has promoted the interests of the Hezb-i-Islami, a fundamentalist group in Afghanistan led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Hekmatyar's links to other local fundamentalist groups, as well as his stated disenchantment with India's Afghan policy, suggest that he may well be, with ISI's acquiescence, providing aid and comfort to the insurgency.

Pakistani leaders from Mohammed Ali Jinnah to Benazir

[3] Barbara Crossette, "Bhutto Is Dismissed in Pakistan After 20 Months," *The New York Times*, Aug. 7, 1990.

Bhutto have used Pakistan's long-standing claim to Kashmir to rally domestic support for their own political goals. Although Pakistan failed in 1971 to hold its two wings together solely on the basis of the common Islamic religious heritage, Pakistani leaders still argue that their coreligionists in Kashmir should be incorporated into Pakistan.

Apart from this historical claim to Kashmir there are other, more immediate reasons for Pakistani support for the insurgency. Prior to her dismissal in August 1990, Bhutto faced a range of direct challenges—the rising waves of fratricidal ethnic violence in the province of Sind, frequent threats to her authority from the military, and a rebellious local leader, Nawaz Sharif, in Punjab. In her home province of Sind, the Pakistan People's Party has been engaged in a bloody internecine feud with the Muhajir Quami Mahaz. The MQM draws its support from "Muhajirs," or Muslim settlers, who came from India in the wake of the 1947 partition. A recent influx of Pathans and Punjabis is challenging the long-held Muhajir dominance of Sind's economy. Also involved in the fray are well-educated Sindhis who wish to dislodge the Muhajirs from their positions of privilege. The Pakistani military, under General Mirza Aslam Beg, had also been somewhat dubious of Bhutto's credentials as a leader. Finally, and most pertinent to the Kashmir issue, the prime minister had been quite widely perceived as being "soft" on India.

Although the emergence of the insurgency in Kashmir enabled Bhutto to address the entire gamut of challenges to her domestic position, it was not enough to keep her in power. Several reasons can be adduced for Bhutto's ouster. Owing to a range of domestic problems inherited from the previous regime, Bhutto was unable to make headway with the actual governance of Pakistan. Among other problems, she was faced with a thriving drug trade, a concomitant growth in the illegal small arms industry, and rising tides of ethnic violence, particularly in Sind. Moreover, her inability to rapidly seize the initiative in tackling these problems made the military increasingly restive. While she was not overthrown in a military coup, it is unlikely that President Ghulam Ishaq Khan would have taken any action contrary to the military's wishes.

In the October 1990 elections Benazir Bhutto, hobbled by repeated court appearances and unable to campaign effectively, emerged only as a minority leader. The president of the Islamic Democratic Alliance, Nawaz Sharif, won a majority of

the national vote and was asked to form the government. It is highly likely that the army will significantly influence Sharif's views on the Kashmir issue. In effect, the new government will not adopt a conciliatory posture toward India as regards the continuing insurgency in Kashmir. The Pakistani government and the bulk of Pakistan's populace are acutely interested in keeping the Kashmir issue alive. After all, this is one issue that unites the Pakistani people, by evoking memories about Pakistan's troubled relationship with her principal adversary, India.

VI

Pakistan has little interest, however, in starting a war with India. Although substantial U.S. assistance to Pakistan has helped modernize its armed forces during the past decade, Pakistan's army remains militarily weak in comparison to India's. Moreover American concerns regarding Pakistan's nuclear capabilities seriously jeopardize further U.S. support. Sensing the prevailing mood in Congress, in early October the administration decided not to seek a waiver under the terms of the Pressler Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, which requires the president to certify that a nation is not actively acquiring nuclear weapons before it receives U.S. assistance. Until such a waiver is sought or the appropriate certification provided, Congress will not continue foreign assistance to Pakistan. This will have a significant impact on Pakistan, which relies heavily on U.S. assistance to modernize its army. Last year alone the United States gave Pakistan $575.9 million in foreign aid, including $230 million in direct military assistance.

Numerical comparisons of the force deployments of India and Pakistan must be made carefully. Although the Indian army is twice the size of Pakistan's, it must patrol India's long border with China. Entire regiments of the Indian Army are also tied down intermittently in providing "aid to the civil power" in the Punjab. India's much longer coastline requires more naval assets if it is to be properly defended. Finally the four Indian divisions that were deployed in Sri Lanka under the aegis of the Indian peacekeeping force are combat-weary and can hardly be pressed into immediate action.

In spite of these important constraints, India possesses important advantages. India has twice as many tanks and artillery pieces as Pakistan, and a nearly two-to-one advantage

in combat aircraft. Its navy is also substantially larger. If necessary the Indian navy could again bottle up the Pakistani fleet, as it did during the 1971 war. These military constraints are daunting even to Pakistan's risk-prone military.

There are also important political costs to a war. Regardless of the outcome, a war could spell the end of Pakistan. A Pakistani defeat could unleash all manner of "fissiparous tendencies" (to use Selig Harrison's phrase) within the state. From Sind to Baluchistan, disaffected ethnic groups, sensing a weakening of central authority, might well step up their activities, leading to a complete political collapse. Even if Pakistan were to win the war its fortunes could take an adverse turn. The military, flush with a victory over the nation's principal adversary, could decide that it had a right to rule. The continuing ethnic strife in the country could simply reinforce such proclivities.

The financial costs of waging a war against India also appear daunting. In a recent issue of *India Today*, two Indian journalists estimated that a single day of fighting against Pakistan would cost India approximately $400 million. Similar analyses are not available for Pakistan; one can assume that, given Pakistan's considerably smaller economy, the cost would be even more onerous. Moreover, with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and an overall improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations, Pakistan's importance to the United States has declined.

Finally, the crisis in the Persian Gulf makes it even more difficult for Pakistan to seriously contemplate a war with India. Through its participation in the multilateral gulf force, Pakistan has renewed its usefulness to the United States. Starting a war with India could quickly place strains on this carefully crafted attempt to continue its ties to the United States.

India, too, can ill afford another war with Pakistan. The political, military and financial costs all militate against it. Even the appearance of anything less than complete victory would bring down V. P. Singh's minority government. The principal opposition party, the Congress (I), has already accused the government of pusillanimity in its dealings with Pakistan. If Indian forces were to suffer a setback on the battlefront, the Congress (I) Party would unhesitatingly accuse the government of having neglected India's security. The Congress (I) Party could also find support from another quarter. The strongly chauvinist, pro-Hindu, Bharatiya Janata Party, which

has long advocated a tough stance against Pakistan, might well break ranks with the government, leading to its collapse.

A number of domestic factors are also likely to confound India's war-making capacity at the present time. For the past several years India has been fighting a terrorist movement in the Punjab, which shows few signs of receding. In areas of the Punjab that border Pakistan the writ of the Indian government has effectively ceased to operate. In previous wars with Pakistan, India could always count on the unstinted loyalty of the populace in these vital border areas. Today, owing to the deep-seated political divisions in the Punjab, such loyalty can no longer be taken for granted. Nor for that matter can India expect Kashmiri Muslims to behave as they did in 1965. Now the loyalties of many Kashmiri Muslims are questionable, owing to machinations of the previous state government.

A war between India and Pakistan would also impose significant strains upon India's foreign relations. In any dispute involving India, the Arab states have traditionally provided Pakistan diplomatic and moral support. There is little reason to believe that they would act otherwise in the event of another war. Apart from diplomatic isolation, the Arab world could easily impose other material costs on India. Currently India is in the throes of a severe energy crunch. It is spending over a third of its foreign-exchange earnings on imported oil, the bulk of which comes from the Arab world. Incurring Arab displeasure when oil supplies have already contracted due to the situation in the Persian Gulf could place India in a most unenviable position.

India's concerns about another war with Pakistan extend well beyond the Arab world. At a time of shifting superpower and regional alignments, India appears to be on the threshold of improving its relations with the United States. Despite considerable wrangling earlier this year at the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Indian-U.S. relations have lost much of their rhetorical acrimony.

At a more tangible level, though still small in absolute terms, American private investment in India is steadily growing. As the Indian economy matures, it is increasingly turning toward the United States for collaborative ventures in such areas as telecommunications, electronics and computer technology. Furthermore, in the realm of defense technology, India is seeking U.S. assistance for the manufacture of an advanced-generation light combat aircraft, a cooperative defense ar-

rangement made possible under the Reagan administration. A war on the subcontinent, when both superpowers want to resolve a range of extant regional conflicts, might well lead to the revoking of carefully crafted defense and technology transfer arrangements.

Despite all these arguments, there are grounds for concern that war could break out. As one U.S. expert recently stated in an interview with *India Today*, both nations have moved to military doctrines of "offensive defense"[4]—in other words, a strategy of preemption. The Indian defense strategy is now oriented toward carrying the war into the Pakistani homeland.[5] It is also configured toward promptly suppressing Pakistani air defense capabilities and the early acquisition of air superiority. In the future such a strategy could even incorporate the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

Moreover, if India does not succeed in quelling disturbances in Kashmir and the Pakistani leadership continues to aggravate the situation, war could take place as a consequence of inadvertent escalation. Given the existence of preemptive doctrines and a tense atmosphere along the border, a minor skirmish could well escalate into a larger war that neither side envisaged. Such a possibility is especially likely in South Asia, where military telecommunications, not to speak of civilian ones, are less than thoroughly reliable, increasing the probability of escalation due to misperception and miscalculation. In December 1987 India's military training exercise, "Operation Brass Tacks," and Pakistan's military exercises, "Flying Horse" and "Sledgehammer," almost led to a war, owing to poor communications and mutual misperception of intent. Only after substantial high-level diplomatic contacts were mutual suspicions eased.

In recent months high-level Indian and Pakistani officials have confronted similar issues. In June 1990 India unilaterally withdrew some armored formations from border areas south of the Punjab. It also gave Pakistan a seven-point proposal for

[4] Stephen Philip Cohen as quoted by Shekhar Gupta and Kanwar Sandhu, "Defense: Are We Prepared?" *India Today*, June 30, 1990, p. 31.

[5] These offense-oriented doctrines constitute a new danger. Recent scholarship suggests the proliferation of offensive military doctrines in Europe prior to World War I was a critical factor in the outbreak of that war. Nevertheless it must be recalled that none of the three Indo-Pakistani wars or the Sino-Indian War of 1962 started by accident. Each of them began after a deliberate, well-organized breach of existing borders by one side. See Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision-Making and the Disasters of 1914*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

de-escalating tensions. The proposals largely dealt with a number of confidence-building measures. They also sought Pakistani adherence to the Indian interpretation of the Simla agreement.

While confidence-building measures are desirable, they are peripheral to Pakistan's concerns. Pakistan is primarily interested in raising the Kashmir crisis in a foreign policy context. India, however, views the problem as an essentially domestic one and considers Pakistan only insofar as it may be involved in supporting the insurgency. Resolving these incongruous positions will not be easy for either side.

VII

What then is the likely future of the Kashmir crisis? The most probable scenario is a continuation of the present situation for the next several months. The Indian government, through a policy of civilian and military repression, will be able to restore order, if not law, in Kashmir. In August Indian security forces arrested much of the JKLF leadership. If it restores a modicum of order in the state, India will still have to move rapidly on both domestic and external fronts. Domestically, it must specify a date for state-level elections and permit a slow renewal of the legitimate political process. This will not be an easy task; the Indian government lacks a viable political center in Kashmir. Nevertheless the alternative to this process could have important adverse consequences for both the present regime and the nation.

Domestic attempts to restore popular legitimacy in Kashmir must be coupled with a willingness to start a dialogue with Pakistan. This does not entail making territorial concessions—no government in India could possibly survive such a move. However, other irritations could be effectively tackled, like the tense situation along the Siachen Glacier in northern Kashmir, where Indian and Pakistani troops have been in a standoff for the past several years. While a resolution of the Siachen issue will not address Pakistan's present claim to Kashmir, it can nevertheless serve as a first step toward reaching a more pragmatic solution to the dispute. One possibility might be a formal acceptance of the status quo by both sides for the next twenty or so years, coupled with a "no-war" pact. In effect this proposal would be the logical successor to the Simla agreement.

The failure to defuse the crisis in Kashmir has important domestic consequences for India and Pakistan as well as

ramifications for the entire subcontinent. For Pakistan a continuing insurgency and concomitant repressive Indian policies in Kashmir will provide a useful rallying theme for any regime, civilian or military. It will also provide a constant temptation to intervene in Kashmir, thereby contributing to tense Indo-Pakistani relations.

For India, a failure to reach political accommodation in Kashmir and reliance on the army to maintain public order could lead to a further erosion of its democratic institutions. The Indian army has long been apolitical, but it is now being increasingly called on to restore public order and may not remain politically neutral for an indefinite future. A continuing insurgency in Kashmir also bodes ill for the secular ethos of the Indian state. If the tides of Islamic fundamentalist sentiment do not ebb in Kashmir they may well lead to a spate of anti-Muslim sentiment throughout northern India. These two developments could have fundamentally corrosive effects on the two most important edifices of the Indian polity—democracy and secularism.

At both regional and international levels this scenario is also fraught with considerable danger. An extended insurgency in Kashmir is likely to lead to continuing small-scale border skirmishes between India and Pakistan with the ever-present possibility of inadvertent escalation. It may also tempt India to provide support for Pakistan's own incipient separatist movements in Sind and Baluchistan, leading to a situation of pervasive instability in an area stretching from Afghanistan to the Punjab. It would also prevent India from moving ahead with a settlement of its long-standing border dispute with China, as this involves portions of Kashmir as well.

VIII

As the United States works to influence the emerging post-Cold War order, it must consider which political norms it wishes to encourage. The Kashmir conflict and its resolution will set important global precedents implicating several issues. First, there is the question of the proper mechanism for the resolution of long-standing border disputes. Both Pakistan and India nominally claim the entire state of Kashmir. Yet the borders of Kashmir have not been fundamentally altered since the U.N. ceasefire agreement of 1949. Will the United States now support attempts to change lines of control that have remained largely fixed over four decades? And in this context,

what attitude will it take regarding aid to insurgencies across national borders?

Second, what stand will the United States adopt on the proper role of religion in government? Will it support India's claim that religious differences can be accommodated within the framework of freedom of worship and the separation of religion and state? Third, the United States must also consider the proper unit of self-determination. Will Washington accept that a culturally diverse polity constitutes an appropriate unit, provided it adheres to democratic norms not inferior to practices prevailing in other states in the region? Or will it call for a stricter test of cultural and religious homogeneity as the basis for self-determination?

It is also in the U.S. interest to prevent the outbreak of another war in South Asia. At a time of declining regional tensions (Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait notwithstanding), a war on the subcontinent would divert U.S. attention from ongoing attempts to shape a new world order. Another Indo-Pakistani war would almost inevitably lead to the overt nuclearization of the subcontinent. Both nations, in all likelihood, already possess crude nuclear forces.[6] In 1974 India demonstrated its capacity to conduct nuclear explosions, while Pakistani agents have been arrested in the United States in attempts to export items that could serve as the triggering devices for nuclear weapons. The overt nuclearization of either country coupled with emerging ballistic missile capabilities would leave U.S. nonproliferation policy in a shambles.

The United States also needs to consider the possibility that an Indo-Pakistani conflict may not remain confined to the subcontinent. Though the possibility of direct Arab intervention is remote, small but significant support may come from the more conservative members of the Arab world. Their support could prolong and spread the conflict to the Middle East, leading to the prospect of a much wider war. Given the easing of East-West tensions, it is imperative that the United States devote comparable attention to the avoidance of a potential Indo-Pakistani conflict and that both India and Pakistan work toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

[6] General Krishnaswami Sundarji, as quoted in an interview with Michael O'Rourke, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Sept. 13, 1990, pp. 24–25.